

# *President's Message*

Last season Ben Keim started his July message with, "Happy peach season." I, on the other hand, am going to start mine with, "Well, it's peach season." It doesn't really feel like peach season, though, as we go out to pick in the morning and are done in about an hour. Talking to many growers, it seems that this year peaches are either boom or bust. The difference from one year to the next is astounding. I remember last season walking into our large cold storage looking at pallets of peaches which I had no idea where to get rid of, while this year I walk into our small cooler and it is empty with somebody calling every day looking for peaches. Prices are very strong but great prices only help so much when you don't have the supply.

In looking at the differences between this year and last, it has pushed me to think more about averages. A lot of times we get wrapped up in what is happening right now. While the current year is important, we also need to take into account what the average between years is. Just looking at the boom years, the bust years do not really give a clear understanding of how a crop fits into the business. If the boom years don't provide the reserves for the bust years, then you are losing ground. I know I prefer spending my time in the field trying to figure out how to grow more fruit and do it more efficiently, but that is only half the battle. You can push your yields but if you have nowhere to go with it you might be digging yourself a hole.

I would like to thank the researchers at FREC for putting on a strong field day this past month. I know I walked away having heard some interesting talks on applying mechanization to the orchard. Twelve years ago at one of my first visits to the research station, I listened to a talk on the implementation of robots in the orchard, and I can at least say I have finally seen a robot arm touching a tree. From pest updates to whacky peach trellis systems, there should have been a topic for all the attendees to walk away having seen something that was at least interesting.

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